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714.00(W)/12-260

UNCLASSIFIED 750007-2340

CONFIDENTIAL

AIR POUCH

Amembassy GUATEMALA

Despatch No. 283

SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 48

December 2, 1960

Recd 12-5-60

Action INR-10

Declassification Date 10-8-75

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Return to Miss Taylor Room 7831 x 4650

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POLITICAL

1. November 13 Revolt Gives Ideas to Other Groups

The abortive military revolt of November 13-16 seems to have led other groups (both military and civilian) to consider overthrowing the Government if first person reports to the Embassy by some of the alleged plotters are to be believed. According to these persons, further attempts must be expected, possibly within days. The usual line of those who have approached the Embassy is that Ydígoras is a smart politician but a terrible President (if he should complete his t , a Communist Government would undoubtedly succeed him and that he is ripe for overthrow. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: Instead of deterring further plotting, the November attempt apparently created a sense of urgency in other groups, each now fearing someone else may act first. The defeat of the November attempt is dismissed as the result of mistakes which those now plotting will not make. The Embassy does not discount the possibility of further attempts against the Government, but feels they will probably be made, if at all, by persons who have not come near the Embassy. (CONFIDENTIAL)

2. November 13 Rebels Say They will Continue Fight

From their exile in Honduras, spokesmen for the November 13 rebels were cer

quoted in "Prensa Libre" on December 1 as having blamed their defeat in part on the "chickening-out" of ma[illegible] of their comrades. Had they been victorious, they said, they planned to reduce the size of the Guatemalan Armed Forces, to convert many barracks into schools and to set up a coalition Government headed by a Junta (with a civilian majority) to rule for three years. Claiming their leaders were still in Guatemala on active duty (they claimed they received financial help from a cabinet minister), they said their revolt had only initially failed and they would soon return to Guatemala. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: From the number of reports received, it seems fairly certa[illegible] that perhaps two thirds of those who "took the oath" did finally "chick[illegible]t." Help from a cabinet minister was unlikely. Although there were one or t[illegible] unconfirmed reports linking the Minister of Defense with the rebels, it seemed far more likely he was one of their principal grievances. (CONFIDENTIAL)

3. Cabinet Changes

Lic. Rodolfo Martínez Sobral was named Minister of Government on November 30 to replace Ricardo Estrada Aguilar, who was named Secretary General of the Presidency to replace Carlos Salazar Gatica, who was named a legal advisor to the Presidency to replace Martínez Sobral. The Embassy understands that Salvador TOLEDO Morán, a member of the Economic Planning Commission, will shortly take over from Julio PRADO García Salas as Minister of Economy. There are reports that Captain Antonio MONTENEGRO Morales will move to Agriculture from Labor. It is taken for granted the present Minister of Agriculture, Col. Peralta will replace Col. J. Rubén GONZALEZ SIGUI as Minister of National Defense.

The Embassy has been informed the President has decided to retain in their posts the following Ministers: Jesús UNDA Murillo, Minister of Foreign Relations; Dr. Mariano LOPEZ Herrarte, Minister of Public Health and Social Welfare; Manuel BENDFELDT Jáuregui, Minister of Finance and Public Credit; and Col. José Luis CRUZ Salazar, Minister of Communications and Public Works. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Prado García Salas told the Embassy Toledo was his own choice. Prado said he would take a new job to follow Central American integration, with the rank of Ambassador. He said he accepted this assignment only to please the President and that he would not stay long in it.

Martínez Sob[illegible]al is a member of Guatemala's Federación Nacional Anticomunista who defected from the MDN to Ydígoras early in 1958. [illegible] (CONFIDENTIAL)

UNCLASSIFIED

4. Agitators Reported Disappeared

Numbers of well-known political agitators have been reported missing this week by their relatives. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Earlier, the Embassy was told by a person close to the President that the latter planned to exile such a group to Nicaragua. (CONFIDENTIAL)

5. Municipal Elections Postponed; Curfew Shortened

As a result of the "state of siege," municipal elections which had been scheduled for December 4 in Departmental capitals and in cities of over 30,000 population will now be held early in 1961. The curfew was reduced to one hour in Guatemala City: 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: The municipal officials to have been elected on December 4 were scheduled to take office on January 1. The delay will mean that present officials will be in office longer than they had expected.(Guatemalan office-holders are not permitted to leave a post until a successor appears to take over.)(UNCLASSIFIED)

MILITARY

6. Changes in Key Military Posts

President Ydígoras made sweeping changes in key military assignments during the week, the most important of which are: Colonel Miguel Angel PONCIANO replaced Colonel Agustín DONIS Kestler as Chief of Staff; Colonel Ernesto MOLINA replaced Colonel Arturo ALTOLAGUIRRE as Under Secretary of Defense; Colonel José Luis LEMUS replaced Colonel PONCIANO as Chief of the Air Force. Commanders of the two regiments in the city were also changed. Colonel Javier AGUILERA assumed command of the Mariscal Zavala Regiment and Colonel Oliverio CAHUEQUE took over as Commander of the Guardia de Honor. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Although not officially announced, the President is reported to have made the decision to appoint Colonel Enrique PERALTA Azurdia, presently Minister of Agriculture, to the post of Minister of Defense to replace Colonel Rubén GONZALEZ Siguí.

It remains to be seen whether these key assignments will quiet the unrest within the Army which sparked the 13 November uprising. (CONFIDENTIAL)

PSYCHOLOGICAL

7. Mulet in Middle of Melee

A "Prensa Libre" editorial took to task the Guatemalan Press Association

(APG) for a meeting it held November 22 to consider the expulsion of Augusto Mulet Descamps, the Presidential Secretary of Information. Without defending Mulet, the newspaper criticized the intemperate proposal of an APG kangaroo court. "Prensa Libre" maintained the APG's methods denied Mulet the right to defend himself. The APG finally decided to take up Mulet's case in its regular court of honor. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Mulet has been displaying more discretion than in the past. His "government-bulletin" war with the press also has subsided. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

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